



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

SPECIAL MEETING

February 2, 2022 – 5 PM – Ludlow Room, Windsor Town Hall and via Zoom

PRESENT: *Sharran Selig-Bennett, Tim Rice, Randy Graff, Jermika Cost, Ojala Naeem, Nathan Karnes, Trevor Throington, and Jane Garibay*

ABSENT: *Jim Martin, and Adam Gutcheon*

STAFF PRESENT: *Peter Souza, James Burke, and Patrick McMahon*

GUEST: *N/A*

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Graff called the meeting to order at 5:05 PM.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

No members of the public were present.

3. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a. **Annual Election of Officers** – Rice nominated Randy Graff for Chairman. Selig-Bennett seconded. Graff accepted the nomination, and the motion carried. Graff nominated Karnes for Vice Chairman, which was seconded by Selig-Bennett. The motion carried.
- b. **Windsor Center Transit-Oriented Development Master Plan and Implementation** – Burke gave the Commission an overview of the TOD plan; giving some examples of past projects and an idea of the overall goal. He stated that the plan was created through an engaged public process from which some key strategic objectives were identified – bring vitality to vacant historic buildings, create new housing, add feet on the street, and help to retain and attract small businesses.

He said that recently the town had submitted a grant application to support a proposed redevelopment of the former Arthur's Plaza. This project would create 100 housing units and 6,000 SF of commercial space, as well as create a public community gathering place. The project would have three phases. McMahon added additional details about the project.

Burke then presented the topic of tax abatement, explaining that the town's policy had been amended in 2014 to include residential projects in Windsor Center, with the Windsor Station Apartments as an example. However, that amendment included a sunset clause which ended in

2017. If the town is to be supportive of additional housing in the Center, he suggested that the Commission consider which tools (TIF, tax abatement, etc.) would be prudent to use for this particular effort.

Selig-Bennett expressed her belief that development in the smaller areas of Windsor, such as the Center, Wilson, and Poquonock areas, should be incentivized, to increase traffic. Karnes also supported expanding the tax abatement policy to housing, but agreed that there should be very specific parameters defining which projects benefit from the incentives. He also expressed an interest in being involved with the town's affordable housing decisions, and asked for a more specific definition of "public" regarding public amenities - to clarify that it is truly a public amenity and not just something available to tenants of the new housing. Naeem said that the categories may vary depending on where in town the development is, but in general she thinks they are the right ones to focus on. Graff summarized that the Commission is in favor of moving forward with the project, and with the redefining of the tax abatement and TIF policies.

- c. **Priority Redevelopment Property List** – Burke summarized the updates on the priority redevelopment properties. He noted that there has been no change to the Plaza building. The Tobacco Valley Inn property has an updated for sale listing as of November but no further development. The Redevelopment Parcel in Wilson is awaiting a park improvement plan design, which is currently out for bid. There is no change to the Udolf property. There has been discussion regarding the Flamingo Inn property but nothing has come of them yet. The parcel north of 457 Windsor Ave, the Spillane property, and the former Scranton Chevrolet site have all had no activity. Larsen's Hardware is not currently listed on the market, but there has been some interest in it. The former Printing Express site has had a Remedial Action Plan, but no additional work. The former Wolcott School that was added to the list last year has been transferred to CREC. Because of this, Selig-Bennet recommended they remove the property from the list. It was seconded by Rice, and the motion passed.

McMahon asked to add the former Arthur's Plaza to the list, and reviewed the criteria for the list. After discussion, Selig-Bennett made the motion to add it to the list, Rice seconded, and the motion carried.

- d. **Business Breakfast Planning** – Burke provided an overview of the purpose and process of the Business Breakfast. He proposed that the topic of this year's event be focused on workforce, which was well received by the Commission. They agreed to move forward with planning the event for the end of May or beginning of June.

4. ITEMS FROM COMMISSION

- a. Graff asked if the Chewy project is moving forward, which Burke reported that they are, and Graff suggested they become involved with the Business Breakfast to discuss/make plans for recruiting workforce.

- b. Garibay reported that FTDT is hosting a Main Street Matters Breakfast on 2/9/22 with Grava Properties to talk about the development project.

5. ITEMS FROM STAFF

- a. Burke reported that they are still waiting on news from DataMail to go to the Town Council.
- b. McMahon gave an overview of the ARPA Small Business and Nonprofit Recovery Grant. The grant money has gone to 54 local businesses and nonprofits so far.
- c. Souza gave an update on the town's efforts to distribute the rest of the ARPA funds and encouraged the Commissioners to give feedback throughout the process on programs and uses they'd like to see. McMahon discussed the idea that some funds be used to create a co-working space in the bank building, currently owned by Loomis. Naeem suggested that the town gauge the public interest and need to determine how best to format the new space, should the project move forward.

6. REVIEW OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

This action was pushed to the next meeting.

7. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:56 PM.